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THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

MISSIONS

Woman's Work in Foreign Missions

October 3 was the anniversary of a red-letter day in the history of Christianity. It marked the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of modern missions, the founding of the first foreign missionary society. The beginning was humble. The total of the first foreign mission fund was thirteen pounds, two shillings, and six pence. Last year, according to reports of foreign missionary societies in the United States and Canada alone, the total income for this cause was \$20,405,493. In 1792 twelve pastors of Northampton met and organized the Baptist Society for Propagating the the Gospel among the Heathen. These pastors sought some place to hold their meeting. They were invited to the home of the widow Wallis. Since then women have always had some part in the work. A recent issue of the *Boston Evening Transcript* contained a review of the work of women in America in promoting foreign missions.

In 1800, Baptists and Congregationalists combined in the organization of the Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes. A year later Congregational women founded the Boston Female Society for Promoting the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge. The Female Mite Society was established in 1808 by Baptist women in Beverly. The Methodists founded a Female Missionary Society in 1819. In 1823 the Presbyterians established in New York the Society for the Support of Heathen Youth. These early societies represented largely local groups of women, but they were the forerunners of the various women's boards and auxiliaries established and fostered by the denominations in later years. One of the first societies to be organized on a permanent

basis was the Women's Union Missionary Society in 1861 in New York. With voluntary workers and unsalaried officers it has continued its work for more than fifty years. In 1868 the Congregationalist women established the Woman's Board of Missions. In 1916 the income was \$215,423, with \$130,265 additional for the Woman's Board of Missions Interior and \$19,553 for the similar organization on the Pacific Coast. In 1869 the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal church was organized. Its income for 1916 was \$1,024,610 from home sources and \$147,126 received on the field. In 1875 the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian church was organized. Its income for 1916 was \$222,747. The Presbyterian women have several other boards whose income totals \$400,000 additional. The Woman's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society was established in 1871; its income last year was \$680,200, which includes a legacy of \$300,000. The Woman's Auxiliary of the Protestant Episcopal Foreign Missionary Board was organized in 1871. The funds raised by it are included in the income of the denominational board, which last year was \$962,686. Some others of the women's foreign missionary societies, with date of organization and income for 1916, are as follows: Christian Woman's Board of Missions, Disciples of Christ, 1874, \$4,213; Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, Dutch Reformed Church, 1875, \$91,295; Woman's Missionary Association of the United Brethren Church, 1875, \$49,705; Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Methodist Protestant Church, 1879, \$20,000; Woman's Missionary Society of the Lutheran Church, general synod, 1879, \$38,054. Other women's societies, with

income for 1916, include: United Presbyterian, \$105,365; Reformed Episcopal, \$4,445; Universalist, \$5,646; German Reformed, \$23,801; Friends, \$20,500; Evangelical, \$18,920; Southern Baptist, \$181,849; Woman's Missionary Council, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, \$235,011 for foreign work, and \$149,213 for home work. Through these women's boards and auxiliaries alone in the United States there was contributed to foreign missions

in 1916 nearly \$3,000,000. "For a century American women have been leading the way, even with their strawberry festivals, their mission-study classes, and the like. They have kept the church's missionary beacon burning, and trained its youth to the broad vision which world-wide evangelism inspires. Many a lay leader in foreign missions today can attribute his zeal to his mother and her missionary society."

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education and Human Welfare

The leading article in *Religious Education*, October, is "Religious Education and Human Welfare," written by Herbert Wright Gates, M.A., director of religious education at the Brick Church Institute, Rochester, New York. He sets forth at the outset that the higher levels of life are attained by the individual only through the subordination of self-interest to the spirit of service. "So the nation must learn to place spiritual human values above material advantage and ambition." The individual must develop a social conscience through social contacts and their accompanying experiences. If the nation is to save itself, it must do so by acquiring a social conscience dominated by high spiritual ideals. We are now face to face with many world-problems. Some of them stagger us. Their wholesome solution can come only through the establishment of a true democracy, that democracy which recognizes and practices the principle of human brotherhood. If to this we must look for the promotion and conservation of human welfare, then what message does religious education bring to bear upon the matter?

After propounding this question the writer answers: "It is nothing new. It is as old as the Christian era and is contained in the words of Christ, 'One is your

Father,' and 'all ye are brethren.'" A sincere application of this principle of love to God and to one's neighbor would solve adequately every one of the great social and economic questions, whether it is the problem of labor, housing, marriage and divorce, charitable relief, crime and reform, peace and war. The establishment of a real democracy and of an enduring peace must be laid in religious conviction. In this is to be found a basis sufficient for the strain imposed by human selfishness and by the conflict of material interests. The expressed conviction of the great company of social workers who responded to the call of the Men and Religion Movement was that "social service must have the religious impulse to make it permanently effective." The task of religious education, therefore, is to make the message of divine fatherhood and human brotherhood of universal force. William James named as the only true criteria of religious experience the qualities of "immediate luminousness, philosophical reasonableness, and moral helpfulness." To the development of these qualities religious training must be directed. The saving of society is assured only when there are trained leaders and a citizenship prepared to follow that leadership. National moral conduct is the net result of the moral choices of the individuals who constitute its citizenship. The task of religious